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JOE AND ELLA



*Adrift on the Sea of Life
No Sail - No Rudder*

Bud and Ella

—BY—

C. A. FOX



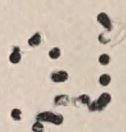
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CHAPTER I.

BUD AND ELLA ADRIFT ON THE SEA OF LIFE—NO SAIL, NO RUDDER.



AW, air you jes' a-goin' to pack that ol' license aroun' 'til you wear it plumb out, or air you a-goin' to give it to me an' let me an' Eller go an' git married? 'Cause you know, paw, it don't look jes' honest-like to tell a gal, 'Le's git married' an' git the license an' ever'thin' an' then quit right thar. Folks is a-goin' to talk, shore."

"I know, son, but I'm skeered," answered the over-cautious father.

"Skeered? Thar's sumpin' worse'n bein' skeered. You kin fergit 'bout bein' skeered, but you caint fergit what folks'll say when they git to talkin'. 'Sides, Eller's folks is gittin' all het up over the way I'm a-doin'. Yander comes Eller an' her paw an' maw, right now. An' paw, you got to do the talkin' fer me."

"All right, Bud, I'll tell 'em jes' how it air. Then if they want to take the chances, I'll give up, an' you kin take her to Oklahoma City, or wherever you kin find a preacher, an' git married."

BUD AND ELLA

Ella and her parents arrived, not in the best of humor, and the first thing they said was:

"Bud, we're come to find out what you aim to do."

Poor Bud! The same old lump came up in his throat, as it always did when Ella's parents would get "fussed up." All he could do was to point appealingly to his father, who answered for him:

"Wa'al here's the way it stan's. I've got a friend who's a marshal, an' he's been a-tellin' me about them Yokum brothers, who is the worst bad men that ever got loose in Oklahoma. Las' week they broke jail an' fought their way back to this country. A whole posse o' marshals got 'em surrounded in a thicket, without horses an' only one gun, an' was a-goin' to keep 'em thar an' starve 'em out. But one marshal he 'lowed he wasn't afeared to go in after 'em. The others tried to keep him from goin', but he would go. He went in an' they heared one shot an' that was all. Them outlaws shot this fool marshal off'n his hoss, took his guns, got on his fine hoss, an' the one behind turned his back to the one in the saddle, so they could see an' shoot both ways. An' here them Yokums come out'n that thicket, like imps o' the

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devil, shootin' right an' left goin' an' comin', an' got clean away.

"An' this yere marshal he 'lowed them Yokums was a-workin' their way back to Oklahoma City. That's whar they had 'em in jail. An' this feller says when they git thar, thar's goin' to be hell a-poppin' 'cause they're a-goin' to kill a lot more o' them marshals afore they git through. An' I tole Bud yere he better wait ontel them Yokums made Oklahoma City an' got their fightin' all done afore he started on this yere weddin' trip. For if they got on that train an' them Yokums was on it an' got to shootin' up marshals, like they do, an' he'd accident'ly pick up one 'r two o' them stray bullets, he'd make a mighty poor husband for Eller."

The girl's parents answered that they would just as soon have a shot-up son-in-law as none at all, and they wanted his answer right then. So they all agreed to leave it to the children.

Bud said he was "plumb willin' an' ready." They asked Ella, who hung her head, nodding it up and down, and twisting around, dragging the toe of her shoe on the ground until her mother was compelled to take hold of her to stop her, while she said:

BUD AND ELLA

"Yore a-kickin' up so much dust we caint hardly see."

So it was agreed that the young folks start that very day disregarding the desperate characters at large.

Ella's folks "lowed" that Bud's father better take the young folks to the train. As he was the only one of them all who had ever been on one of "them cars," he could sort of post the young folks on travelin'. Ella had on her best dress, and as Bud had the one suit to choose from, they were soon ready, the boy's father remarking that he had only one spring-seat for the wagon and they would all have to ride in it.

The spring-seat not being any too wide, squeezed "Bud an' Eller" close together. This being the first time they had been so very close to each other, made them feel bashful at first and they looked away from each other. Finally they became accustomed to this close fit and began to look at each other, then grin and look away again. From there on to Sapling, the railroad station, they looked at each other and grinned continually.

When Bud's father drove up to the station, this travel-instructor didn't even get out of the wagon, but just pointed, saying:

"Yander's the depot whar you git yore tick-

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ets, an' these long iron things is what the train comes in on. An' when it comes in hang onto it. Trains don't wait fer nobody."

After giving this abundance of travel information to this poor inexperienced couple, he said:

Wa'al, I must be a-goin', as it'll be late 'fore I git home."

CHAPTER II.

THE INVITATION



UD HAD been to Sapling before and had seen the trains pass through. Ella had never been farther from home than the school house and church near her home. But she was ready and willing to trust and obey anything that Bud said, provided she was frightened or at a loss what to do or say. Otherwise, if she was familiar with the subject in question, she was ready for an argument. That little, red head would bob around and those freckled eyelids snap open and shut when she was defending her views in a controversy. But here was one of the places where Ella was the obedient kid.

Bud had never ridden on the cars, but he had seen them, and that gave him the privilege of being boss temporarily. Ella wanted to see the train right away, and everything she would see or hear, she would ask him if that was a train. Bud finally persuaded her not to ask any more questions, assuring her that he would let her know when the train came.

In purchasing their round-trip tickets, the

THE INVITATION

agent told them that it would be about dark when the train that was going to Oklahoma City arrived, adding that if they wished supper, they could get it as soon as the girl rang the bell in front of the dining-room door over there, pointing toward the little hotel.

Bud thanked him for the invitation and smiled knowingly as he told Ella of how liberal these train people were.

"I been a-lookin' at that place an' shore knew what it was. I'm anxious to try one o' them town-cooked meals I heard so much about," said Ella.

They kept walking back and forth past the dining-room door, until finally the girl came out and rang the dinner-bell, when this couple walked into a hotel dining room for the first time.

The waitress, who was of the typical railroad eatinghouse type, sauntered up to them and snapped out:

"Ham 'n' eggs an' beefsteak!"

Bud looked at Ella and she looked at him, but neither said anything, as they did not have the slightest idea of what the girl meant. So they just sat still and grinned.

The girl waited, and as other guests were coming into the dining room, she grew very impatient and snapped out angrily:

BUD AND ELLA

"Ham 'n' eggs an' beefsteak, I said."

"Gosh! that's enough," said Bud.

"Say, I want to know what you want for supper," said the waitress, "ham and eggs or beefsteak."

"Oh!" said Bud. "I'll take ham an' eggs."

The waitress looked at Ella in a sneering way and asked:

"What'll you have?"

Ella said: "I'll have the same."

Then the girl, more impatiently than before, snapped out:

"How'll you have your eggs?" looking disgustedly at Bud, who failed to understand, as the only way he knew there was to cook them was to fry them.

As Bud failed to understand, the waitress looked appealingly at Ella. The dining room was filling up and the girl was in a rage. She picked up an empty chair and slammed it down on the floor as she walked around in front of Ella and almost shouted:

"How do you want your eggs?"

"Cooked of course, you darn fool," snapped Ella right back.

And those freckled eyelids popped open and shut so fast that the waitress decided to say no

THE INVITATION

more to her. When the angry waitress reached the kitchen she yelled:

"Two orders of ham and eggs, cooked any darn way you please."

The supper in the railroad dining room was progressing slowly. The only waitress, who must also act as cashier, was agitated beyond reason on account of the two extra guests and their poor understanding of city life. As she would pass their table, she glared at them and would say to herself:

"If I was that doggone green, I'd stay at home."

The waitress did not know what a Godsend it would have been to this poor, green, young couple to have stayed at home; as they were so excited and embarrassed right then that they could hardly endure the humiliation. But they were determined to get married and the nearest parson was in Oklahoma City; and they were going there whether or not.

Bud finished his meal as soon as he could, and not thinking about Ella, started right out of the dining room.

When the much-ruffled waitress saw him going, she jumped in behind her cashier's counter to collect for the meal. Bud was still very much

BUD AND ELLA

excited, and with his head bowed in embarrassment, started to walk by. The waitress promptly stepped in front of him and said, in her usual way:

"Haven't you forgot something, Mister?"

Instantly Bud grabbed the front of his pants, and after running his finger up and down and finding that the buttons were all fastened, answered:

"Nope, I reckon not," and started on again.

This time the waitress demanded that he pay for the meal, which he did under protest, as he was sure that the agent had invited him to eat.

Ella came out and together they went to the depot where they sat upon the benches to await the train, neither talking, but both thinking of all the unexpected things that had happened. And as they sat there, thinking and dreaming, they heard the train coming. Ella grabbed Bud by the hand and pulled him outdoors, saying that she was not going to let anything like that come up on her without seeing it come.

When the train stopped Bud and Ella grabbed the first place where they had seen anyone get off, which was the smoker. They took a seat near the middle of the car and grinned at each other for the first time since they had left the dining room.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPLIT GLASS MYSTERY



ELLA BEGAN to think she was "some punkins" now, when she found that Bud was as green as she was, and began to talk right out and ask questions, none of which Bud could answer. But that made no difference to her, she asked just the same, for there were so many new things and nearly all of them were funny.

The old conductor came along, noticed the young lady in the smoker, and informed them that there was a chair car behind, which meant nothing to them, and they did not answer. And the conductor, noticing that they were only children, paid no further attention to them, but said:

"Tickets, please."

Bud handed out the tickets bravely, and as the old man seemed friendly, Bud asked him how long it would be before they got there. The old conductor looked at his watch and then up at the ceiling, Ella followed his every move with unusual interest, then said:

"Twelve-one we get to Oklahoma City."



“TICKETS PLEASE!”

THE SPLIT GLASS MYSTERY

Ella did not get the meaning and whispered to Bud:

"What did he say?"

Bud answered in a whisper: "About twelve or one."

As one hour made little difference in their young lives, they were satisfied with the answer as they understood it.

Then they asked his name, which he told them, and asked them theirs, when they both began to giggle. Bud explained that the girl's name was going to be changed as soon as they found a preacher. He pulled out the license and showed it explaining that Oklahoma City was the nearest preacher and they were going right to him to "git married."

As the conductor wished them luck and handed Bud the return tickets back, Ella asked:

"Old man, what do you have your glasses cut right in two in the middle for?"

The conductor had already sized them up for what they were, and was in sympathy with their ignorance; but this personal question made him say to himself:

"You little, red-headed upstart, it's none of your business."

But having children of his own, he knew that,

to keep from being asked the same question again, he would have to answer it. So, after looking at her through the upper part of his split glasses, he said:

"Young lady, these are double-vision glasses; the upper part is for viewing objects in the distance."

"Oh!" said Ella, still not having the least idea why the glasses were split in two.

She was still looking at him in curious wonder when Bud spoke up real confidentially and told the conductor about his paw "packin'" the license around two weeks after he got it, and about "Eller's folks gettin' after him for it." And Eller told of "Bud's paw bein' skeered of outlaws."

The conductor, not knowing what was coming next, began to back away, telling them he would see them later. But before he left the coach, he turned and looked upon them with pity, shaking his head dejectedly and thinking. He sympathized with their helplessness in this world, and as he walked back into the other cars, his thoughts stayed in the car ahead. He figured how uneven would be their opportunity to defend themselves from the odds that were against them; and how people would take advantage of them, while they would be unable to raise a voice in their own be-

THE SPLIT GLASS MYSTERY

half. "Poor things! Adrift on the sea of life with no sail or rudder." But he contented his mind by saying to himself:

"There is no one going to take advantage of those poor innocent children while they are on my train. I will see to that."

As often as he possibly could, he went through the smoking car, sizing up the passengers that sat near them, and looking for suspects of any kind, who might have designs upon his unwary self-appointed charges.

The news agent, making his regular trip through the train, spotted them and as they purchased none of his wares, he was satisfied they would buy if he could find out what they liked. So he gathered up a bundle of cheap novels and told them to look the books over.

On his next trip he gathered the books up, asking if they wanted any of them. Bud told the newsie that he didn't like any of them, but asked:

"Have you got the life of Jesse James?"

The eager, anxious and optimistic way Bud asked this question convinced the newsie that he could get any price he asked if he could get hold of a copy, and he assured the greenhorn that he would bring one on his next trip.

Then the newsboy began to rustle. He asked

every Pullman porter, brakeman and even the engineer. And as the train would stop, he would search every store and news stand along the road for any kind of an old copy of Jesse James.

Keeping up this constant search for hours made the newsie more determined than ever to find the book. And as the stores and news stands were closing for the night, the unabated search was centered among the few places that kept open all night, the station agents and the lunch counters.

He would hurriedly ask each operator at the stations if he had the life of Jesse James, and would usually get an answer like this:

"No, we've got no life of this James nor any diaries of Columbus."

And usually when he would ask the lunch counter man if they had an old copy of Jesse James, they would answer him by saying, that they had just one copy of ham and eggs left, which they might sell if that would do as well.

Each one took a turn at kidding the anxious newsboy, as he rustled the stations where the train stopped; but he persistently continued the search until he discovered a copy in a chili-parlor that was some distance from the depot. After obtaining this coveted copy, he was compelled to

THE SPLIT GLASS MYSTERY

run like a horse to catch the train, which was moving on as he reached it.

All out of breath he boarded the train, shouting breathlessly:

"I found it! I found it! I've got it right here!" addressing the train crew, who had gathered around the excited boy, thinking he must be going "dippy," not knowing the extent of his efforts to "find it."

When the newsboy had recovered his wind sufficiently, he told the crew of the almost impossible discovery he had made, and of the nice piece of change coming to him for his trouble, cleaning the accumulated mud from his shoes and clothes, which had been deposited there by his flying feet in that mad race from the chili-parlor to catch the train.

After making himself presentable, the proud newsboy hurried to the smoking car. When he arrived he found his customer and the girl in a hot argument regarding "poor folks and rich uns," and as it is bad form to approach your customer in a case of this kind, he hesitated for some time.

Finally, discovering that neither one had the least idea of what they were talking about, the newsie walked right up and said:

"Here she is, old boy!"

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Bud picked up the old copy of Jesse James, and his face brightened up as he smiled and said:

"That's shore it. An' I reckon that's the best book that ever was," as he fondly turned the pages over.

After fully admiring the treasure, he handed it back to the newsboy, saying:

"You shore got a good book thar!"

The newsie, almost breathless again, said:

"Well, well, don't you want to buy it?"

"No," said Bud, "I've got one jes' like it at home, and so has my paw got one."

"Say, you asked me if I had Jesse James, and that means you want to buy one, in my way of thinking," said the now angry newsboy.

"Wall, I shore hate to have a misunderstand-in' like this. When I say 'have you got one,' I shore don't mean I wanter buy one," said Bud.

And at that, Ella chirped in, saying in her "sassy" way:

"Well, of all things!"

CHAPTER IV.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING.



HE newsie, realizing the hopeless idea of making anything in an argument with a sucker, turned the matter off as a huge joke and beat it to his trunk. There he began to "frame" on this country boy.

The first trick he intended to play upon this "Rube" was with three wooden boxes, each one about the size of a pack of playing cards. He clipped about an eighth of an inch off the end of a one-dollar bill and pasted it across the end of one of the boxes, making it appear as if he had put a bill into the box, and in closing the lid down, had failed to get all the bill into the box. When he put the lid on this box, there was just enough of this strip showing to be recognized as part of a bill.

This finished, the newsboy walked up to Bud, smiling, and said:

"You're a good kid, and I'm going to give you a chance to buy a box for a dollar. I am not going to tell you about the good things the boxes are filled with. Besides, look, I am putting into this

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one a five-dollar bill, and I am going to give you your choice for one dollar."

As the newsboy closed the box with the five-dollar bill in it, he began shuffling the boxes around, and in that way, turned them end for end so as to have the one with the piece of bill pasted on facing the sucker. As the newsie finished his shuffling and spieling, he fanned the boxes out, saying:

"Take your pick for a dollar."

Bud saw a piece of that five-dollar bill sure, for he grabbed his dollar and Ella saw the same thing as she urged him to hurry up. She was assisting Bud in getting his dollar into the newsboy's hands, so as to get the box with the money in it.

They both grabbed for the same box, and when they opened it, they learned their first lesson, the one we must all learn—how hard it is to get something for nothing.

But this time they had lost nothing, for the old conductor was there at the time and he made the newsie pretend that it was another huge joke. And as the newsie gave back the dollar, Eller snapped those freckled lids at him a few times and said:

"Think yer smart, don't cha?"

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

The old conductor marched the newsie back to his trunk, where he explained to him that this couple had his unbounded sympathy and he intended to protect them if possible, and the newsboy said:

"You sure got a job."

Bud 'n Eller, finding themselves alone, resumed the argument about "poor folks an' rich uns." Ella said that, as they got farther from home, folks looked different, and she believed everyone that had a stiff hat and a white shirt was rich.

Bud argued differently as he said you couldn't tell a rich man from a poor "un" just by "lookin' at 'em." And he clinched his argument by citing her to a debate at the school house one time, where the winning side had shown that the only difference between rich folks and poor "uns" was this: "Poor folks drink ice water in the winter time and rich folks drink it in the summer time."

This argument ended, they began to talk about the weather, for it was dreadfully cold that time of night without steam. Ella, who was sitting on the outside next to the aisle, in her effort to get warm, began to crowd up close to the bashful Bud, making him crowd over as near the window as he could. Everyone was freezing cold, and

BUD AND ELLA

they all wondered why the engineer did not turn on the steam.

The old conductor heard so many complaints about the cold that he sent the brakeman over to tell the engineer that everybody was freezing, and that if he had any steam to turn it on please. When the brakeman delivered the message, the engineer said:

“For God’s sake! I forgot that steam.”

And he immediately turned the steam valve wide open, to make up for lost time.

The train soon heated up with the full head of steam on; and everybody became happy and talkative except Bud 'n Eller, who were enjoying each other’s company so much, on account of being so close together, that they just sat and grinned at each other until Bud smelled something.

Bud looked critically at Ella, who in a short time, also smelled something very unpleasant, and she in turn, looked critically at Bud, neither one saying anything, but each one mutely and silently accusing the other until the accusations were so openly registered upon their faces that it was only a matter of a few seconds before the guilty one would be pointed at with a finger of shame and in tones of clear understanding.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

Ella had stood this smell until she was sick, and she had fully decided to come right out with it, as she was not "a-goin' to put up with nothin' like that." She moved over from Bud as far as possible and turning her face toward him, said:

"Look yere, Bud—"

"Ouch! Fire! Fire!" yelled Bud.

"Where?" asked Ella.

"Down yander," said Bud, pointing toward his feet.

By that time Ella was out in the aisle with the other passengers watching, as poor Bud limped out, bringing with him a trail of smoke. Poor boy! He had sat there squeezed up tight against the hot steam pipes and burned out one whole side of his new boot.

Ella wanted to apologize for all the nasty things she had, in her mind, accused him of as he had been sitting there burning. But she had never learned how to make an apology, so she did the next best thing she could by offering to take the inside seat next to the treacherous steam pipes. This she did, while poor Bud, with his head hanging in shame, wilted down into the seat beside her.

The old conductor consoled them as well as he could, assuring them that there would be a law passed compelling the railroad company to cover

BUD AND ELLA

these steam pipes with a screen, and tried, in his fatherly way to comfort them. But they were not in the mood for consolation. And in summing up their situation, they had decided to act from then on without the advice of anyone. As Bud had said, after summing up the happenings of that day:

"I ain't a-goin' to do nothin' that nobody says no more. Look at what that depot agent done, asked us to eat an' then made a fuss an' made us pay for it and that boy a-tryin' to make me buy a book, and then said he was a-goin' to give me a five-dollar bill for a dollar, an' all that stuff. I've shore learned my lesson today."

He was going to say more when Ella chirped in saying:

"Yes, an' them split spectacles!" "I'm shore a-goin' to watch that ol' man, 'cause folks don't have glasses split right in two in the middle whar they look th'ough, lessen thar's some trick to it. I'll shore be glad when we git back home."

Just the mere mention of home brought them back good-naturedly to the fact that they were on their wedding trip. And as the unpleasant odor from the burning boot had caused all the other passengers to leave this permeated coach, this pair, finding themselves alone, began to laugh and

BUD AND ELLA

joke as they did down on the farm. Bud said:

"I'm a-goin' to see what folks has been a-gettin' outen that corner up thar."

Going up the aisle, he clung to the backs of the seats on each side to steady himself. He had decided long ago that it must be quite a feat to walk on the train "an' it a-goin', without holdin' on." Reaching the water-tank in the corner, he cautiously examined everything, touching it to see what would happen, until he accidentally touched the water faucet and the water ran out into the tin cup under it. He tasted the water, then looked at Ella and snickered.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

Bud hurried back to where she was, still snickering, and looking around to see that there was no one listening, he laughed right out, and said:

"Eller, this is a poor folkses' car, ice-water in the winter time."

And they both had a good laugh.

Bud continued walking up and down the aisle, each time learning that he could walk without much assistance from the backs of the seats, until finally he could go right along without touching anything. Then he began to show out by walking up and down the aisle unassisted in front of Ella.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

As she did not seem to be interested in the exhibition, he called:

"Look at me, Eller!" And as she looked, he grinned and said:

"Hat-ding! I'm a ridin' an' a-walkin' same time!"

And up and down he pranced until she said:

"Yes, you shore do cut a figger, showin' out with that ol' burnt-up boot on!"

Bud's head dropped again; for the first time he had thought what a terrible "out" he would make "a-standin' " up in front of that preacher with his boot all "burnt out" on one side. After thinking seriously for some time, he looked right at Ella defiantly and said:

"I'm a-goin' to dew it! I don't care if they do call me a 'dang dude.' "

"Do what?" inquired Ella.

"Put my pants legs outside my boots."

"But," continued Bud, "I'm not a-goin' to dew it 'long's we're on this yere train. I can stick my good boot out when anybody comes in, an' they cain't see t'other one, 'cause I got it stuck back."

They rode for some distance without speaking, evidently each untrained mind was trying to solve the mysteries of that day. Finally Ella spoke up, asking:

BUD AND ELLA

"What did that ol' man mean when he said that about vision or sumpthin', when I first ast him about his split glasses?"

"I dunno," said Bud, "I ain't a-goin' to pay no attention to nobody no more—'sides that preacher," he added, hesitatingly.

The fumes of the burnt leather had left the coach, and that old man, the conductor, had visited them, but as they were sociable no more, he soon left them, thinking they were sleepy.

The train stopped at dimly-lighted and desolate stations, and occasionally passengers would get on. Invariably, if they were men, they would enter the smoking car.

Bud 'n Eller would carefully look them over as they entered the "poor folks' coach," but never again would they enter into a conversation, for as they said, "no tellin' what next." Bud had just enough money, by saving every cent his paw had allowed him, including five dollars for the preacher, and for that reason, he must take no more chances with strangers.

The train stopped at a weird-looking flag-station, which indicated absolutely no sign of life; there was the flicker of only one light in this destitute place, and under the light sat the form

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

of the night operator, the telegraph instrument in front of him. Everything looked natural enough, but there was not the slightest indication of life in this man. It was impossible to tell whether the life had been taken from his body or if he was sitting there alert and ready to respond to the slightest call from another operator.

The old conductor gave that silent signal with his lantern for the engineer to go. As the steam entered the cylinders and the slack of the train was taken up, two men, of about the same size and build, mounted the steps of the smoking car, and passing Bud 'n Eller, selected a seat near the front. Never did these men turn their faces nor look back.

As the train stopped at other stations further on, other passengers got on. It was late and they were nearing Oklahoma City. Everything was quiet; no one was talking.

Bud was thinking of his coming disgrace of going before the preacher with a burnt-up boot, or his pants' legs on the outside, which was just about as bad. He knew that he was not showing off very well before his girl. He decided that maybe he was not standing very well with her, and he felt that he must do everything he could from then on to show her that he was the man she had

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believed him at home.

Ella was still thinking about "them split glasses," and she had half a mind to put the old man on the pan once more, as she was sure there was some trick about glasses cut in two right in the middle.

Several more stations were passed and other passengers got on the smoker.

CHAPTER V.

THE MARSHAL.



ELLA lazily and quietly snuggled down, getting closer to Bud all the time, until her little red head was partly resting upon his shoulder. Bud began to get "skeered," for he knew, by all the manhood that was in him, that he should put his arm around and support her. But he had never had his arm around her; and to do it for the first time, right there with other folks "lookin'," almost took his breath.

But the thought of the poor showing he had made with her that day spurred him on until his fearful and desperate mind compelled him to do it. He cautiously slipped his hand along the back of the seat, thinking in his breathless determination what she might say if he did or if he didn't, when his hand abruptly touched the hand of another.

Bud gasped, as he exclaimed, "Oh!" which put Ella on her guard; and they both turned to look at the owner of that hand. They discovered that he was a large and powerfully-built man, with a hard-worn and determined face. Following the

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body down with their eyes, they saw that the other hand was confidently grasping the handle of a forty-five Colt's revolver. On the cartridge-filled belt was the mate to this pistol he held so positively, while between the two guns was a metal badge, reading "United States Deputy Marshal."

As they looked at his face again, they could see that his eyes were fastened, with a determined satisfaction, upon the two men in the front, who had entered the car so quickly and quietly at the still and desolate flag-station behind.

Bud 'n Eller could see that the marshal meant business. They knew that they were not going to ask, hear, see, or know anything from there on; but had decided to sit still, like two little mice, for they felt so small under the towering position of this marshal.

As they went on, other passengers noticed the expression upon the face of this man and moved back to the next coach for safety. The old conductor, finishing the report that he must turn in at Oklahoma City, where he doubled back on the same road at one forty-five on a train called "Number Nine," went to the front of the smoker and began taking up tickets.

Those two strange men were first, and as they had no tickets, the conductor collected money

for the fare. During all this transaction these desperate men never raised their eyes, as they did not want to be recognized.

Coming next to Bud 'n Eller, the old man chatted pleasantly with them, explaining that he also stopped at Oklahoma City, but that he only stayed in that place one hour and forty-five minutes. Then he must double right back over the way they had come.

"Gosh!" said Bud. "You shore have a fine time."

"Yes," said the conductor, "I suppose I should pay this company for the privilege of doing about sixteen hours of work every night."

This man, like the majority of others, believed that he was doing more than he should, and was real touchy upon the subject; and they both noticed that what Bud had just said did not please the old man.

Bud explained that what he meant by having a fine time was the fun he had riding up and down on the train all night every night.

"Yes, I understand," said the old man. "You are about as well-posted in regard to the work a man has to do as some of our superintendents."

And before leaving them, he gave Bud a very stern look.

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Ella nudged Bud, saying:

"Look at what he's a-doin' now, lookin' plumb over the top o' them split glasses at you."

As the old conductor turned his reproachful gaze from Bud, the next thing he saw was the fearless form of the marshal. And as he reached out his hand, saying, "Tickets, please," he moved directly in front of the man, obstructing the constant and determined gaze of the marshal, who politely took the old man by the arm and moved him out of the way, at the same time placing his forefinger across his lips, in that way warning the conductor with this silent command, to keep his mouth shut.

The old man, showing by his looks, actions and a series of facial expressions that he did not understand, the marshal, pointing to the badge on his cartridge belt, motioned the old man to move on toward the rear. The officer, walking backward, quietly followed.

When out on the rear platform, he told the conductor that the two men in front were the Yokum brothers, two of the most blood-thirsty killers ever known. Continuing, he said:

"My partner and I have been following them all night. On the blind baggage in front, on top, on the rods and all over this train, we've been on

THE MARSHAL

it nearly all night. But they don't know I am after them, for they are on their way right now to kill me. Them boys have killed more marshals than they got fingers and toes. Sure bad ones! Had 'em surrounded by twenty marshals. Didn't do no good. Busted right through 'em.

"Keep yourself and crew out of that car, and tell that gal and boy to move out quietly. For if them fellers suspect anything, the fireworks starts right then. And when the show does start, I know I'm a-goin' 'to get one. Goin' to get an even swap anyhow, and might get 'em both, as I'm a-startin' early-like this time. Two on one gives a man the right to start sort o' peart-like.

"At the first shot I aim to fall on my back, as close to them as I can, and shoot with both hands, back'ards like, right up among 'em. Drop-pin' that away sometimes fools 'em and you can get two good shots 'fore they know you ain't dead."

The old man knew the place he was going to ride, and that was on the rear-end platform of the last sleeper. But before going he was going to take one more chance to save the innocent ones he had been caring for all night.

As he tip-toed back, he was frightened when he thought of the fate of the loved ones at home

BUD AND ELLA

should he arouse the suspicions of the killers. While he was whispering in Bud's ear, begging him to retire to the car behind, Ella, unable to hear what the old man was saying to Bud, became suspicious and whispered in Bud's other ear:

"Member 'bout them split glasses."

The old man, getting a half-promise from the boy, hurried back to his rear-end platform, leaving his charges to arrange for their own protection.

Bud told Ella what the old man had said, and she gave him full power to decide for them both. After thinking for a second, he remembered his declaration:

"Ain't a-goin' to do nothin' nobody says no more."

And Bud shoved his hands down in his pockets and said:

"No, I'm a-goin' to stay right yere."

At that instant the marshal put one hand on the back of their seat, the other hand fondly clasping his savior, or you might say, his life. Or was it the lives of the others? Fate must tell in a very short time, as it must and will tell in a show-down like the one to come.

Bud 'n Eller knew the marshal was there without looking. They settled down like still mice

THE MARSHAL

again, for they were afraid of the marshal. They had never seen the faces of the two men in front, nor did they know that these men were the Yokum brothers, so they were not afraid of them at all.

The train rumbled on as usual, making its usual stops, but as the hour was growing late, no one was getting on or off. It seemed that everybody was going right through to Oklahoma City. As the train would stop and start there seemed to be scarcely any noise at all. Everything was dark and quiet at the stations.

As the train sped onward it seemed to run with an uncanny stillness. So pronounced was the hush that the creaking of the woodwork inside the old car could be heard so plainly that it was annoying. So still was it that it seemed as if inanimate things knew of the impending storm that must break, blasting the lives of good and bad alike. And the old smoking coach creaked on more distinctly than before, regardless of what was about to happen.

The marshal was positive that these outlaws did not know of his presence in the car, but he was mistaken. They probably did not know that it was he, but they knew that they were being watched, as in cases of this kind they always know. There is no way of knowing how they find

BUD AND ELLA

out. Some kind of conscious or sub-conscious mind tells them and they know.

These boys knew they were being watched, by whom it made no difference. They knew, without talking it over, that when the train stopped at Oklahoma City, they would wheel, like the lightning experts they were, and with a smoking gun in each hand, blaze a trail with fire and lead toward the back of that smoking car.

The marshal also knew that, when the train stopped, the trying ordeal was at hand; but he faltered not. It was a pitiful sight to look at the unbroken vigil of this man, outnumbered, as he was, two to one, either of the outlaws being quicker on the draw and surer of the shot than he. Still he stood there and looked with that fearless and unbroken confidence to win, every fiber of his body like a taut bowstring, ready to dispatch with all the speed and accuracy he possessed, those arrows of hot lead, which would tell the story of life and death.

CHAPTER VI.

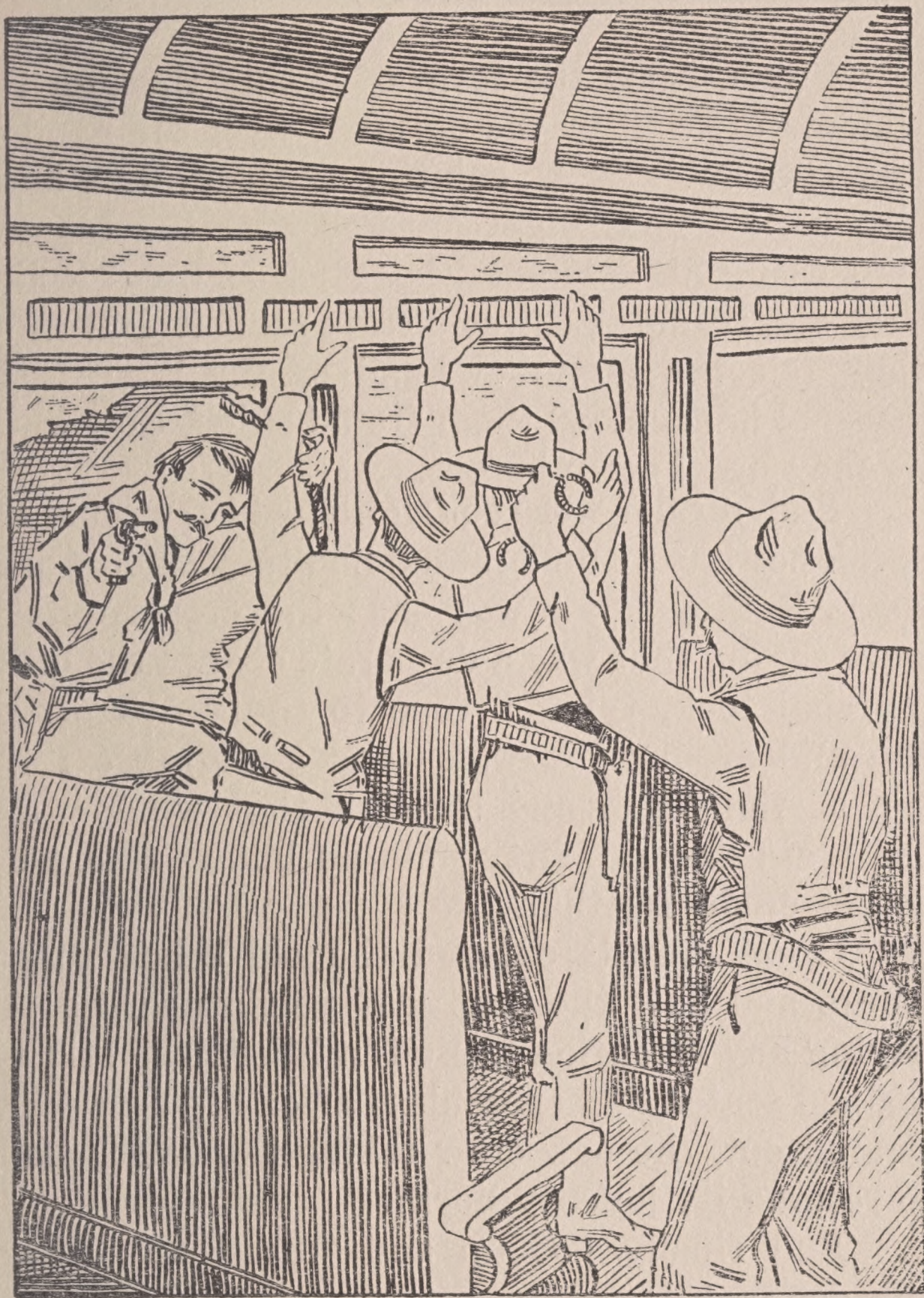
THE CAPTURE.



THE unmindful old coach creaked on, deaf to the impending storm, while everyone seemed tense with feeling or, like Bud 'n Eller, tense with fear. The young folks were positive that something was going to happen, but they had no idea what it was going to be.

Every head in the coach was erect, every hand and every muscle still and unmoving; but every joint, every sinew, every nerve was alert and ready to move when the appointed time came.

The marshal stood as he was, fearless and positive, with his uneven chance to enforce the law, the climax was close at hand. Now that the lights of the city could be seen and they were coming nearer. Now they were passing the green and red lights in the yards. Muscles drew tighter; nerves became fretful and alert; sinews tightening and relaxing, making ready for the spring to action. A wonderful silence fell over all; even the old coach stopped creaking as the engineer applied the brakes. Fire and sparks flew like miniature rockets from the grinding wheels.



THE CAPTURE

THE CAPTURE

Crash, came the form of a man through the window in front of the outlaws, with the hand of unquestionable death pointing at them, with hammer cocked and finger crooked over the trigger, supporting his command to "stick 'em up," which they did, thinking it was a train robber. But when they felt the powerful hand of the law as the marshal handcuffed them from behind, they knew as they had known before.

Bud 'n Eller were so frightened they could not speak nor hardly understand had they been spoken to. All they knew was that the crowd outside were saying that was a desperate chance the other marshal took, tying a rope to the ventilator on top and around his waist and swinging off the top of the coach and through that window and the train "a-goin' fifty mile an hour. Shore deserves credit fer that."

Great crowds entered the old coach to see where and how the feat was performed, no one paying any attention to Bud 'n Eller, who still remained seated and speechless after the crowd had cleared out, the new crew taking the train, ready to resume its journey north.

Bud finally got up and "moseyed" toward the door. Ella partly rose, but sat down again, Bud stopped and waited, saying:

BUD AND ELLA

"Ain't cha comin'?"

Ella did not answer, so after waiting some little time Bud returned to her and said:

"Well, this is the place." Waiting a moment again, he added, "This is Oklahoma City."

"Well, I know it," snapped Ella, looking peeved.

Bud waited; the new conductor said "A-board!"

Bud said: "They're a-goin' on."

"I cain't he'p it," said Ella.

Bud got real excited and grabbed Eller by the arm, saying:

"Come on! Come on!"

Then she snapped those freckled eyelids at him, saying:

"Let me alone. I know what I'm a-doin'."

That settled it. Bud quit right there and sat down beside her, believing that he understood her predicament.

The train was under way; the new conductor came along, saying:

"Tickets, please."

Bud handed him the return-trip end, not knowing where he was going or what he was doing.

The new conductor looked at the tickets and

THE CAPTURE

then at Bud, when he finally said:

"You're going the wrong way, partner. Who told you to get on this train?"

"Nobody," said the excited Bud. "We was a-goin' to Oklahoma City to git married, and that feller jumped th'ough that winder an' skeered Eller yere, and she wouldn't git off."

"Why were you going to Oklahoma City to get married?" asked the suspicious conductor.

"Cause they ain't no preachers whar we live."

Then the conductor was shown the marriage license and was convinced that everything was all right. He, like the old man, took a charitable interest in the poor, unfortunate greenhorns.

The old conductor at Oklahoma City was looking for the young couple and he was positive that they did not get off. So he sent a wire to the new conductor to put that couple on number nine when he met the train.

The new conductor understood, and immediately informed Bud 'n' Eller that in about an hour they would meet another train and he would put them aboard and they could go back to Oklahoma City on it, adding that the old conductor would meet them there and show them where the hotel was. They both grinned, but said nothing.

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Bud began to wonder why Ella would not get off the train. He dare not ask her. For if it was what he thought it was, and he asked her and she told him, "Gosh!" that would plague him to death, and he never would get over it.

So every time the conversation referred to anything near that, Bud would change the subject at once. Finally Ella began to bob up and down, shaking herself in various ways, Bud moving away as far as possible from her. At last she said:

"I'm all right now."

Bud did not answer. She had said and done enough. He did not want to hear any more about it, as he was positive now. Then she began to snicker and laugh and said:

"Bud, do you know what was the matter when I wouldn't get off the train?"

Bud, leaning out in the aisle as far as he could and turning his face from her, answered:

"I know all I want to know about it."

"Well, you're not so powerful brave yourself, 'cause you were skeered, too. 'Course, not as bad as I was, 'cause I was jes' skeered limber. My laigs wouldn't stand under me, just bent over when I stood up. An' I didn't want folks seein' somebody pack me out like I was sick. So I jes'

THE CAPTURE

set here, that's why."

Bud said, "Shore enough, is that why?"

When she assured him that was the reason, he began to laugh, and on he laughed until she caught him by the shoulder and shook him, asking him:

"What air yew a-laughing at?"

Between convulsions, he told her he was laughing at what he had been thinking about. And when she asked him what that was, he stopped and said:

"You'll never know."

"Here we are," said the new conductor. "Come on, and I will square it so you can get back to Oklahoma City."

He led them to the other train, where he told the conductor on number nine that this couple had failed to get off on account of the excitement, asking him to take them back with him to the city, where they intended to get married. Smiling, he continued:

"Oh, yes, they have the license; all they need is a preacher."

Bud 'n' Eller, upon boarding number nine, found that there were scarcely any passengers on it at all, which suited them fine.

On the platform, where one conductor had

BUD AND ELLA

been telling the other about having the license and all they needed was a preacher, a broken-down railroad man was listening. These railroad men, when out of work and in good standing, can always ride free from one town to another when looking for work, and are called "deadheads." As this one was "deadheading" his way to Oklahoma City, he had nothing to do but observe and listen.

After "taking in" the conversation between the two conductors on the platform, he naturally followed the green couple into the coach, until an idea struck him. This scheme would make him enough to eat on, if it worked.

CHAPTER VII.

MARRIED, "TEE-HEE."



ANYWAY, the deadhead hurried into the next car dressing-room, where he washed his face and hands clean, combed his hair, turned his celluloid collar backwards, and reappeared from the front. Holding his hands clasped as a minister would, he walked solemnly down the aisle and took a seat opposite the young couple.

Bud noticed him and was sure he was a preacher. And the same lump came up in his throat as he thought of what he was about to do when he reached Oklahoma City.

After sitting that way for some time, the deadhead spoke to them in a ministerial way, asking:

"Are you going to the City?"

Ella, not seeing who was asking the question, said:

"It's none o' yore business."

Bud nudged her, as he did not want her to "sass" a preacher. Eller looked around Bud, and catching sight of the man with his collar buttoned

BUD AND ELLA

behind and his fingers and thumbs pressed together, she also thought him funny or different or something. And as he did not have on any split glasses, she felt that she had done wrong. So she whispered for Bud to tell him "yes."

Bud said, "Yes, we're a-goin' t' stop in Oklahoma City tonight."

The deadhead said that he was going to stay there also, mentioning the fact that he was a preacher, which interested Bud 'n' Eller so much that they became very confidential, even asking his advice about what people "done" when they got married, the deadhead advising them to suit his plans.

Bud told the man that his, Bud's paw, had given him five dollars to pay the preacher with. Upon hearing this, the deadhead became very active. He explained to them that, on the back end of that train, there were sleeping cars with beds in them; and that for three dollars they could hire one of "them" beds and have a nice little room, curtained off, all by themselves.

The railroad man also told them that they could give him the five dollars and he would marry them right there in the aisle, adding that they didn't need to get off that train at all, and showing them how they could save money by doing as

MARRIED, "TEE-HEE"

he advised.

They said nothing. The time had come and they were "skeered." The railroad man, seeing this, insisted that they give him the five dollars, adding that after he married them, he would take them back and get them a nice little room with a bed in it, saying:

"And you can sleep until you get plumb back to Sapling."

Bud 'n' Eller, having finally agreed to this arrangement, the railroad man told them to stand up. The train was slowing up for Oklahoma City and he must work fast if he was to get that five dollars. By the time the train had stopped, he had them lined up in the aisle. He took their license and said something about love and obey, which was all the deadhead knew about weddings, handed them the license back and said:

"Now hug and kiss. You're married."

He then led them back to the first sleeper, and arousing the porter, asked:

"What have you got for a new-married couple, Sam?"

The darkey, rubbing his eyes, said:

"Ah ain't got nuffin' but upper thirteen, Boss."

"That's good," said the deadhead. "Give it



MARRIED

MARRIED, "TEE-HEE"

to these folks quick."

And he took the three dollars from Bud and gave it to the porter for the berth.

Sam grabbed his ladder, as the deadhead railroad man ran from the car to tell his friend, the brakeman, what he had done, and as they were talking and laughing about the smooth trick, the old conductor mounted the train, all out of breath, looking for the couple that were going to get married.

It was so good that the deadhead told the old conductor what he had done, showing the five-dollar bill he had collected for his trick.

"My God! That won't do," said the old man, as he trotted back to the sleeper.

Meeting the porter, who was just putting the ladder away, he asked:

"Sam, where did you put that young couple?"

"Upper thirteen," said Sam, the porter.

"How long have they been in that berth?" asked the excited old man.

"Jes' 'bout free minits," answered Sam. "Jes' a-puttin' this yere ladder away."

"Thank God," said the old man earnestly, and he called loudly:

"Hey, you folks in upper thirteen, get up and get out of there. You are not married at all. That

BUD AND ELLA

fellow was a tramp, he was no preacher."

"Come on, get up," he urged in a commanding tone.

He waited for a second, when the curtain of upper thirteen parted a little and a little, red head appeared, with a freckled and smiling face, and she said:

"Tee-hee, yore jes' a little bit tew late this time, Ol' Man!"

THE END.

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